United Nations A/CONF.192/PC/10

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 July 2000

Original: English

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Note verbale dated 28 June 2000 from the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the secretariat of the Preparatory Committee

The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and, on behalf of the Government of the United States and on behalf of the European Union, has the honour to transmit for issuance as documents of the Preparatory Committee, in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 54/54 V of 15 December 1999, the United States-European Union Statement of Common Principles and Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons (see annexes).

00-52585 (E) 130700

Annex I to the note verbale dated 28 June 2000 from the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the secretariat of the Preparatory Committee

United States-European Union Statement of Common Principles on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Washington, D.C., 17 December 1999

The United States and the European Union agree that the problem of the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons demands the urgent attention of the international community.

They agree that a comprehensive approach is needed, addressing human security, development, law enforcement, disarmament and arms control, and legitimate national and collective defence requirements.

Both are committed to seeking urgent, concrete and practical responses through global, regional and national measures. Their approaches include stemming the flow of illicit trafficking, confronting those aspects of the legal trade that contribute to the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, and dealing with the root causes of conflict that fuel the spread of small arms.

To better address these issues, the United States and the European Union will expand their cooperation, coordinate their activities, and reaffirm the common principles governing their conduct.

The European Union pledges cooperation with the United States Comprehensive Initiative on Small Arms and Illicit Trafficking. The United States pledges cooperation with the European Union on small arms, including support for the objectives and principles of the European Union Joint Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in December 1998, consistent with United States policy and domestic legislation.

They agree that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should take concrete and tangible steps to combat the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons.

They agree on the goal of concluding the Protocol to Combat the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition by 2000, which will serve as a key element in international efforts to combat illicit firearms trafficking.

Recognizing the special responsibilities that arms exporting States have, the United States and the European Union affirm their commitment to observe the highest standards of restraint in the transfer of small arms and light weapons. They reaffirm support for the OSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers. With respect to policies on small arms and light weapons the United States welcomes the European Union's adoption of the European Union Code of Conduct on arms exports and the principles contained in its criteria, which the United States endorses.

The United States and the European Union agree on the importance of effective national controls for arms brokering.

The United States and the European Union underline the importance of preventing the unauthorized retransfer of small arms and light weapons.

They will explore appropriate and effective measures of transparency in the transfers of small arms and light weapons.

The United States and the European Union will work to improve their cooperation and coordination with third countries and, to that end, they will focus urgent attention on practical disarmament measures in potential conflict and post-conflict situations where the problems are most severe, in particular in Africa. They will also pursue measures to address the problem of the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in the Balkans.

The United States and the European Union resolve to encourage and support States to ensure the security of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons and to coordinate respective activities designed to assist countries to collect and destroy surplus weapons. They will contribute to reducing and ending the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms, taking into account requirements for legitimate national and collective defence, and participation in peacekeeping operations under the Charter of the United Nations and internal security.

The United States and the European Union welcome the interest of the non-governmental organization community in this field, and encourage them to continue their important efforts, which complement the work of Governments.

In furtherance of the above-mentioned principles, the United States and the European Union agree to identify areas for coordinated action.

Annex II to the note verbale dated 28 June 2000 from the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the secretariat of the Preparatory Committee

European Union-United States Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Washington, D.C., 17 December 1999

In support of the principles agreed by the European Union and the United States and to advance their common objectives, the European Union and the United States will take the following steps:

1. Establish a working group on small arms and light weapons for regular exchanges at the expert level. The working group will promote increased cooperation and information-sharing and evaluate progress achieved by the European Union and the United States on small arms issues. The group will meet at least once during each European Union Presidency,

2. Work together to address the problem of illicit trafficking in firearms, including the completion by 2000 of the Protocol to Combat the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition now being negotiated in Vienna as part of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, complementing other efforts to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons.

3. Coordinate efforts to provide assistance, in particular, where the problem of the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons is most severe.

4. Promote support for the observance and the enforcement of the Economic Community of West African States moratorium on the import, export and manufacturing of small arms in West Africa.

5. Promote the observance of United Nations sanctions governing arms transfers to areas of conflict in Africa. Work together in the United Nations and in other forums to strengthen enforcement of arms embargoes established under the United Nations Security Council, including working together to tighten controls on sources of financing that help sustain arms flows and violent conflict in Africa.

6. Cooperate in considering measures to combat illicit arms brokering and measures to prevent the unauthorized retransfer of small arms and light weapons.

7. Promote the inclusion in United Nations peacekeeping mandates and other relevant missions of effective measures to deal with the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons, and to coordinate assistance provided for this purpose.

8. Cooperate with appropriate bodies of the United Nations for more effective coordination of assistance in areas severely affected by small arms problems.

9. Work together in regional forums, such as the OSCE and EAPC, in efforts to contribute to combating and preventing the destabilizing accumulation and

spread of small arms and light weapons, including stockpile management and security.

10. Coordinate their planning for a successful outcome to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects with a view to achieving tangible results at the Conference, including an action plan for the international community to deal with the small arms problem.